

THE LEGENDS OF SPECIALTY SERIES

*Specialty*

ART NEVILLE. HIS SPECIALTY RECORDINGS

*Art*  
**NEVILLE**

**HIS SPECIALTY RECORDINGS: 1956-58**

1. **PLEASE BELIEVE ME** 1:39  
*previously unissued*
2. **STANDING ON THE HIGHWAY** 2:10  
*{Specialty 2165}*
3. **PLEASE DON'T GO** 2:36  
*previously unissued*
4. **WHEN MY BABY WENT AWAY** 1:49  
*previously unissued*
5. **PLEASE LISTEN TO MY SONG** 2:41  
*{SP 2165}*
6. **A LOVER'S STORY** 2:52  
*{SP 2165}*
7. **OOOH-WHEE BABY** 3:12  
*{SP 2165}*
8. **THE WHIFFENPOOF SONG** 1:59  
*{SP 592} October 29, 1956*
9. **OOOH-WHEE BABY** 2:08  
*{SP 592} October 25, 1956*
10. **LET'S ROCK** 2:36  
*{SP 2165} unknown date*
11. **BACK HOME TO ME** 2:21  
*{SP 2165} October 25, 1956*
12. **ZING ZING** 2:00  
*{SP 637} April 2, 1958*
13. **CHA DOOKY-DOO** 2:33  
*{SP 637} April 2, 1958*
14. **THAT OLD TIME ROCK 'N' ROLL** 2:18  
*{SP 2165} April 2, 1958*
15. **ARABIAN LOVE CALL** 2:22  
*{SP 656} September 18, 1958*
16. **ROCKIN' PNEUMONIA AND THE BOOGIE-WOOGIE FLU** 2:10  
*previously unissued in U.S.  
June 14, 1957  
Duet with Larry Williams*
17. **WHAT'S GOING ON** 2:00  
*{SP 656} June 18, 1958*
18. **BELLE AMIE** 2:17  
*{SP 2165} September 18, 1958*
19. **THE DUMMY** 1:52  
*{SP 2165} June 14, 1957*
20. **I'M A FOOL TO CARE** 2:18  
*{SP 2165} June 18, 1958*

Selections #1-4 are demos with Art Neville, piano and vocals (unknown drums); #5-7 are full band demos; #8-20 are master recordings produced by BUMPS BLACKWELL or HAROLD BATTISTE.

Compiled and produced for reissue by **BILLY VERA**

Digital transfers from analog master tapes by **Andrew Niedzwiecki**

Digital remastering, 1992—**Joe Tarantino** (Fantasy Studios, Berkeley)

Series supervision by **Billy Vera**  
Original series design format by **Thomas E. Williams**  
Package production by **Linda Kalin**

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Total time has been rounded off to the nearest minute.

**TOTAL TIME 47:00**



AAAD



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# Art NEVILLE

**U**nless you've been under a rock for the past decade, you're at least acquainted with the Neville Brothers band. They've been part of a bi-coastal fetish of recent years for all things Louisianan. The trendies discovered what the rest of us have always known: when it comes to good food, good music, pretty women, and good times, the Pelican State is Da Place.

Afternoon television cooking programs show us how to grill blackened catfish or the proper manner of beheading crawfish; kitchen cabinet shelves across America contain jars of filé powder right next to the Tabasco sauce, and any schmuck from Bangor to San Diego knows how to order gumbo at the local Hojo's.

Cable television viewers are familiar with Queen Ida, Joel Sonnier, and other practitioners of zydeco and Cajun music who also appear at festivals throughout the world. Record companies are falling all over themselves, trying to release anything in their vaults remotely resembling New Orleans or Louisiana music. Musicians from Louis Armstrong and Fats Domino to the most obscure also-rans are the subjects of massive reissue programs now that the CD has replaced the LP as the configuration of choice.

What sets the Neville Brothers apart is that they alone in 1992 remain active, vital, and are still making national pop hits, as brother Aaron's singles and VH-1 appearances with Linda Ronstadt attest.

All the Nevilles still live in the same Valence Street neighborhood they grew up in. Art, the subject of this album, was born there on December 17, 1937 and was the first sibling to enter the music field. This wasn't too unusual; Crescent City residents take to music the way people from rural areas take to tractors. Art's instrument, then and now, was the keyboard—organ and piano.

His first gig of note was as replacement for Mac Millet, piano player for the Hawkets, a local band consisting of August Flury, trumpet; Carol Joseph, trombone; George Davis, alto; Morris Bashman, tenor; Alfred August, guitar; Ervin Washington, bass; and John Boudreaux, drums. Boudreaux and Art later met up on Instant, where John was songwriter Allen Toussaint's house drummer and where Art cut one of the all-time top Louisiana romantic ballad favorites, "All These Things."

While with the Hawketts in 1954, Art recorded "Mardi Gras Mambo," an infectious slice of second-line madness which, to this day, is inescapable on Louisiana radio at Carnival time. Inexplicably, Chess didn't do another session with the Hawketts, despite the fact that, via Paul Gayten, the label had established a strong presence in the city.

In early 1956, Specialty opened a New Orleans office on North Claiborne Street, manned by Harold Battiste. The first four cuts on this package are the demos Harold and Art cut to convince Specialty owner Art Rupe to sign the 18-year-old Neville. Cuts five through seven are full band demos made to audition material for Art's first Specialty session. Art's first release, "Oooh Whee-Baby," was produced by Bumps Blackwell, who had done the honors for Little Richard and would do likewise a year later for Sam Cooke. A variant of the tune was recorded several years later under the title "Gee Baby" by Joe & Ann on Ace, another "New Orleans" label out of Jackson, Mississippi.

Harold Battiste did a couple more sessions with Art before the latter was called up to serve in the Navy. On one, he joined forces with Specialty star Larry Williams on a cover of Huey Smith's "Rockin' Pneumonia and the Boogie-Woogie Flu"; on another, Art led a version of Larry's "The Dummy," a wacky novelty about a guy in love with a department store mannequin which predates the movie *Airplane* by two decades.

While Art was in the Navy, Specialty released two more of his records. "Cha Dooky-Doo," still a favorite on Louisiana oldies radio, is notable for its early example of distortion guitar which, according to Battiste, was caused by a blown power tube in the amplifier. The last single, "What's Going On," was co-written by a young Mac (later Dr. John) Rebennack, whom Harold also tried to interest Rupe in recording. [For a photo of Mac from the period, see our *Creole Kings of New Orleans* (SPCD-2169-2). The back reads: "This is Mac Rebennack ~~one of the~~ (sic) the top R&R bandleader in the South. He wants to sign with us. Coz is his mgr. I heard him and I know he's got what it takes. . . in every way."]

All three records flopped, but every time I hear the unreleased "I'm a Fool to Care" (not to be confused with the Ted Daffan song popularized by Les Paul & Mary Ford and, later, Joe Barry), I think a potential standard was overlooked. So what else is new?

Art returned to civilian life in 1961 and cut the aforementioned "All These Things" for Joe Banashak. Around the same time Aaron was also recording under the tutelage of Allen Toussaint for Banashak's other label, Minit. Considered classics today, the records did nothing at the time. It wasn't until Aaron hit with "Tell It Like It Is" in 1967 that there was a Neville on the national charts.

Later that year, Art, together with guitarist Leo Nocentelli, bassist George Porter, and drummer Joseph "Zigaboo" Modeliste, formed what was perhaps the greatest rhythm section of the era—the Meters. Soon, every bar band with

pretensions of hipness had "Sophisticated Cissy" and "Cissy Strut" in its repertoire and the Meters themselves became in-demand session players. Their contributions to the lexicon of the period include "Right Place, Wrong Time" (Dr. John), "Yes We Can Can" (Lee Dorsey), "Lady Marmalade" (Labelle), as well as several great but modest-selling LPs on Warner Brothers. In the mid-Seventies, the guys got together with their uncle, George Landry, for an album on Island of chants of the Mardi Gras Indian tribes—Wild Tchoupitoulas.

Despite the accolades and high visibility, however, including a TV special with Professor Longhair, the Meters split up in 1977. Art finally got together with his brothers Aaron, Charles, and Cyril and formed the band that bears the family name. They keep making records, thanks to the willingness of even majors to take a chance that the next album might be the one which, after almost 40 years of fine, authentic New Orleans music, would put the Neville name on top, where it belongs.

—Billy Vera,  
1992



**1. PLEASE BELIEVE ME 1:39***(Haywood-Tucker) publ. unknown; previously unissued***2. STANDING ON THE HIGHWAY 2:10***{Specialty 2165}***3. PLEASE DON'T GO 2:36***previously unissued***4. WHEN MY BABY WENT AWAY 1:49***previously unissued***5. PLEASE LISTEN TO MY SONG 2:41***{SP 2165}***6. A LOVER'S STORY 2:52***{SP 2165}***7. OOOH-WHEE BABY 3:12***(Art Neville) ATV Music-BMI {SP 2165}***8. THE WHIFFENPOOF SONG 1:59***(Minnigerode-Pomeroy-Galloway-Vallee) EMI Miller Catalog, Inc.-ASCAP  
{SP 592} October 29, 1956***9. OOOH-WHEE BABY 2:08***{SP 592} October 25, 1956***10. LET'S ROCK 2:36***{SP 2165} unknown date***11. BACK HOME TO ME 2:21***{SP 2165} October 25, 1956***12. ZING ZING 2:00***(Neville) ATV-BMI {SP 637} April 2, 1958***13. CHA DOOKY-DOO 2:33***(Mae Vince) ATV-BMI {SP 637} April 2, 1958***14. THAT OLD TIME ROCK 'N' ROLL 2:18***(Andrew Johnson) Parker/Specialty Catalog-BMI {SP 2165} April 2, 1958***15. ARABIAN LOVE CALL 2:22***(White-Gains-Matassa) ATV-BMI {SP 656} September 18, 1958***16. ROCKIN' PNEUMONIA AND  
THE BOOGIE-WOOGIE FLU 2:10***(Huey Smith) Cotillion Music-BMI; previously unissued in U.S.; June 14, 1957  
Duet with Larry Williams***17. WHAT'S GOING ON 2:00***(David-Rebennack) ATV-BMI {SP 656} June 18, 1958***18. BELLE AMIE 2:17***{SP 2165} September 18, 1958***19. THE DUMMY 1:52***(Larry Williams) Arc Music/Larina Music-BMI {SP 2165} June 14, 1957***20. I'M A FOOL TO CARE 2:18***{SP 2165} June 18, 1958**All selections written by Art Neville (Parker/Specialty Catalog-BMI), except as indicated.*

## Art Neville

vocals and/or piano

Selections #1-4 are demos with  
**Art Neville**, piano and vocals  
(unknown drums)

#5-7 are full band demos  
(recording dates for demo tracks unknown)

#8-20 are master recordings produced by  
**BUMPS BLACKWELL**,  
**HAROLD BATTISTE**, or  
**SONNY BONO**

### OCTOBER 25, 1956

J & M Studios, New Orleans

Lee Allen—tenor sax  
Alvin "Red" Tyler—baritone sax  
Frank Fields—bass  
Earl Palmer—drums  
Alfred August—(unknown)  
A&R—Bumps Blackwell

**"OOOH-WHEE BABY"** (#9),  
**"BACK HOME TO ME"**

### OCTOBER 29, 1956

Cosimo Recording Studios, New Orleans

Earl Palmer—leader, drums  
Lee Allen—tenor sax  
Alvin "Red" Tyler—baritone sax  
Mac Millet—piano  
Roy Montrell—guitar  
Frank Fields—bass

**"THE WHIFFENPOOF SONG"**

### JUNE 14, 1957

Cosimo Recording Studios

Lee Allen—tenor sax  
Frank Fields—bass  
Leo Morris—drums  
Edward Jordan, Alfred August, Roy Evans—(unknown)  
A&R—Harold Battiste

**"ROCKIN' PNEUMONIA AND THE  
BOOGIE-WOOGIE FLU,"**  
possibly **"THE DUMMY"**

### APRIL 2, 1958

Cosimo Recording Studios

Charles "Hungry" Williams—leader, drums  
Charles Fairley—tenor sax  
Alvin Tyler—baritone sax  
Irving Charles—guitar  
Frank Fields—bass  
A&R—Harold Battiste

**"ZING ZING,"**  
**"CHA DOOKY-DOO,"**  
**"THAT OLD TIME ROCK 'N' ROLL"**

### JUNE 18, 1958

Cosimo Recording Studios

Roy Montrell—leader, guitar  
Clarence Ford—sax  
Edward Frank—piano  
Justin Adams—guitar  
Frank Fields—bass  
Charles Williams—drums  
A&R—Harold Battiste

**"WHAT'S GOING ON,"**  
**"I'M A FOOL TO CARE"**

### SEPTEMBER 18, 1958

Cosimo Recording Studios

Rufus Gore, Jr.—sax  
Alvin Tyler—sax  
Allen Toussaint—piano  
Roy Montrell—guitar  
Frank Fields—bass  
Edward Blackwell—drums  
A&R—Sonny Bono

**"ARABIAN LOVE CALL,"**  
**"BELLE AMIE"**

**"LET'S ROCK"**

(unknown date, location, and personnel)

Musicians' names were obtained from union contracts of original recording sessions. In a few cases, unfortunately, we have been unable to identify instruments played.

Specialty

Specialty

Pub: Venice-BMI  
Time: 2:30CHA DOOKY-DOO  
(M. VINCE)  
ART NEVILLE  
637  
(S1,23)

Specialty

Pub: Venice-BMI  
Time: 2:08

45-SP-592-5032

OOOH-WHEE BABY  
A. NEVILLE  
ART NEVILLE  
And His Band  
592*The Legends of Specialty Series—***ART NEVILLE  
HIS SPECIALTY RECORDINGS: 1956-58***Original sessions produced by***ART RUPE***Compiled and produced for reissue by***BILLY VERA***Digital transfers from analog master tapes by***ANDREW NIEDZWIECKI***Digital remastering, 1992***JOE TARANTINO**  
*(Fantasy Studios, Berkeley)**Series supervision by***BILLY VERA***Series package design by***THOMAS E. WILLIAMS***Package production by***LINDA KALIN**

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*In 1946 Art Rupe founded Specialty Records, one of the first post-war independent labels to specialize in black popular music. For the next decade and a half, the company remained at the forefront of the genre by finding and exposing new talent, many of whom went on to achieve legendary status. Heroes such as Little Richard, Lloyd Price, Sam Cooke, Larry Williams, Percy Mayfield, Roy Milton, Joe Liggins, Jimmy Liggins, Jesse Belvin, Clifton Chenier, Guitar Slim and Art Neville are only a few of the many great recording artists who were discovered and/or nurtured by Art Rupe. The Legends of Specialty Series salutes and celebrates some of these stars of Rhythm & Blues, Gospel and Rock 'n' Roll who found their place in the history of American music at Specialty Records.*



# PROMOTIONAL Specialty®

**ART NEVILLE:  
HIS SPECIALTY  
RECORDINGS,  
1956-58**

1. PLEASE BELIEVE ME
2. STANDING ON THE HIGHWAY
3. PLEASE DON'T GO
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**SPCD-7023-2DJ**

DIPX 014298

## **The Legends of Specialty Series**

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AAD

COMPACT  
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